(b) The safety and safeguard of foreign tourists is a law and order subject of the State/UT Administration. However, Ministry of Tourism regularly takes up reported cases of crime/harassment against foreign tourists with the concerned authorities on top priority basis.

(c) Travel circuits/destinations are declared in consultation with State Governments. No proposal regarding declaration of Chitrakoot has been received from the State Govt, of U.P. As regards erection of helipad at Chitrakoot, there is presently no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

(d) The airport at Allahabad and Khajuraho are located at a distance of 100 kms. and 85 Kms respectively from Chitrakoot. As per policy on Airport Infrastructure, no new green field airport is constructed within an aerial distance of 150 Kms. of an existing airport.

Posting of Gujarati Guide At Kailash Mansarovar

1726. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of pilgrims visit Kailash Mansarovar every year;

(b) whether Gujarati visitors are one third of the entire yatris;

(c) whether there is no Gujarati Priest to guide the Gujarati Yatris and, therefore, Gujaratis are not given adequate guidance;

(c) if so, whether Government would consider for posting of a Gujarat knowing priest there; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Approximately 400-500 Yatris visit Kailash Mansarovar every year. This year, 492 Yatris performed the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

(b) Yatris come from all parts of the country, including Gujarat.

(c) The Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, along the traditional route across Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh District of Uttaranchal, is conducted under a bilateral agreement with China. The Yatra is co-ordinated by the Ministry of External Affairs and conducted with the assistance of various Central and State Government agencies, including Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam and Indo Tibetan Border Police.

(d) There is no system of priest for any group.

(e) The Government deputes a serving Government officer as Liaison Officer with each batch of the Yatri.

Visit of Japanese tourists to Buddhist circuits

1727. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state the action taken to attract more Japanese tourists to the Buddhist circuits in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): The Department of Tourism has printed the Budhhist circuits and Sunny South brochures in Japanese language. A PR film on Buddhist circuits and South India has also been produced, which had widely covered Andhra Pradesh. In addition Travel Agents education seminars on Buddhist sites have been organized regularly at several places in Japan.

NRI Investments in Tourism Sector

1728. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM
AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any new package to attract Non-Resident Indians to invest in the renovation and development of tourism destinations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would consider formulating such a package; and

(d) whether Government have formulated any innovative measures to promote tourism in the country to bring up to the level of international standards?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has identified Tourism as a "High Priority" industry for foreign and private investment. Consequently a Foreign Investment Promotion Board and Project Approval Board has been set up by the Government to clear proposals for foreign investment expeditiously. Further, foreign investment and investment by NRIs upto 100% are being cleared under the automatic approval scheme by the RBI itself. The Ministry of Tourism has formulated plans to attract NRIs and Persons of Indian